



Education Watch

Enhancing Accountability, Local Control, & Parental Choice ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman

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House Republicans Launch Effort to Strengthen Special Ed

The House Education Committee today began an important series of hearings on improving the nation's special education system. The process will lay the groundwork for legislative action this year on reform and reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the primary federal law serving children with special needs -- a top priority for President George W. Bush and congressional Republicans.

"Despite dramatic improvement over the years, too many disabled children are still being left behind academically," said Education Reform Subcommittee Chairman Michael Castle (R-DE). "[W]e look forward to passing a bill, hopefully this year, which will focus on accountability, reduced paperwork, decreased misidentification, improved parental involvement and recruitment of special education teachers."

On March 21st, the House approved a Republican budget blueprint for FY2003 that includes a \$1 billion increase in funding this year for IDEA -- as requested by President George W. Bush - and calls for full-funding of IDEA within 10 years. House Democrats did not offer a budget of their own.

Congressional Republicans are also exploring a series of significant reforms, including accountability, paperwork reduction, supporting special education teachers, reducing over-identification and mis-identification of minority students, discipline, and expanding parental involvement.

News of the Day

Children with special needs deserve the best education we can give them.

- ❑ *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be fixed and fully funded.*
- ❑ *The GOP budget for FY 2003 includes another \$1 billion increase to help states and local communities pay for special education. It calls for full funding of IDEA (40 percent of the overall cost burden) within 10 years.*
- ❑ *IDEA funding has increased 227 percent since 1994, when Republicans took control of the House.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- According to Secretary of Education Rod Paige, about 6 of every 10 American students with disabilities graduate with a regular high school diploma, but in some states the graduation rate is fewer than one in four.
- Fewer than half of African-American children with disabilities leave school with diplomas.
- In Nevada, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, fewer than one in five African-American children with disabilities receives a diploma.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The IDEA has yet to fulfill its promise. The doors are open, but the system still denies too many students the opportunity to reach high academic standards. That is why the IDEA needs reform." -- Education Secretary Rod Paige, testimony before House Education committee, October 4, 2001